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SUBJECT: PORTUGAL ON THE EU-RUSSIA SUMMIT

REF: MOSCOW 5117

Classified By: POL CHIEF TROY FITRELL, REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) Summary. Portugal's October 25 bilateral meetings with Russia will be designed to keep current relations warm. Even the October 26 EU-Russia summit will discuss issues generally and in a relatively short format. The Portuguese noted, however, that they do not see the December 10 deadline as an end to Kosovo negotiations, suggesting that the review of the report and subsequent action may take months. The Portuguese believe Russia will accept an abbreviated OSCE election monitoring mission for the December 2 Duma elections. End summary.

¶2. (U) In a pair of tour d'horizon meetings, Portuguese MFA Europe Director Liliana Araujo and the Foreign Minister's Diplomatic Adviser for Europe Rita Laranjinha discussed the October 26 EU-Russia Summit and related topics.

Portugal-Russia

¶3. (U) President Putin is scheduled to arrive October 25, which will be dedicated primarily to bilateral meetings. He will have consecutive courtesy calls on President Cavaco Silva and Prime Minister Socrates, followed by the inauguration of the Hermitage Museum exhibit in Lisbon. Also on October 25, in the first EU-Russia event of the visit, the Portuguese and Russian Ministers of Culture will participate at a Permanent Partnership Council dedicated to cultural issues.

¶4. (C/NF) Araujo noted that Portuguese-Russian relations are relatively warm and Cavaco Silva and Socrates are not expected to raise contentious issues at the bilateral meetings. She continued, however, that as they would meet without a specific agenda, one could not discount that either Cavaco Silva or Socrates would press specific points.

EU-Russia Summit Atmospherics

¶5. (C) Both interlocutors noted that the EU-Russia Summit would be short, including a working session of two hours and a 90 minute lunch. Attendees will include Socrates, President of the European Commission Durao Barroso, and High Representative Solana. Araujo said the working session would be dedicated to the four EU-Russia common spaces: economic, justice/security, external security, and research/education. The lunch, she said, would be dedicated to regional and international issues, specifically Kosovo, Iran, the Middle East Peace Process, and Burma.

¶6. (C/NF) Laranjinha told us that the October 26 EU-Russia Summit would not be heavily substantive. She quoted Minister Amado as suggesting that it was a "transition summit" given upcoming Duma and presidential elections in Russia and

political uncertainties in several EU member states. Araujo later added that Portugal's goal was to lay the groundwork for a genuine dialogue, so that future such meetings could go farther in addressing difficult issues. At this summit, Laranjinha said there would be a deliverable on cultural issues, but not on narcotics trafficking, as had been originally hoped.

¶17. (C/NF) Laranjinha said that she understood that Russia had informally agreed to allow the OSCE to send an observation mission for the December 2 Duma elections, and she confirmed the issue would be raised during the summit. Araujo later said that it was already too late for a traditional OSCE monitoring mission, but that a short-term mission to cover the actual election day was likely.

¶18. (C/NF) Araujo noted that Russia had requested CFE be on the agenda, but that the EU had refused. Araujo had told us on another occasion that other fora were more appropriate. Nonetheless, the EU was prepared for Putin to raise the topic anyway and would stress only that Russia should not suspend implementation of CFE while current discussions were ongoing.

¶19. (C/NF) Araujo also noted that energy would be discussed during the economic common space discussions but it would be at a general level. When specifically pressed on transparency in energy investments and on the southern corridor, she said the discussions would not reach such a level of detail.

Kosovo

¶10. (C/NF) Laranjinha said that the Serbs had already released a statement to end speculation that they would

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support a parallel election process in Kosovo, either concurrent with or after the November 17 Kosovo elections. Laranjinha said Serbia's entire justification for its territorial sovereignty argument was based on its reading of UNSCR 1244. Thus, she said that given that any elections in Kosovo not supervised by the international community are specifically prohibited by 1244 left Belgrade with little other choice.

¶11. (C/NF) Laranjinha stressed the EU's usual points that no one must prejudge the troika negotiations until they are complete, but added that a December 10 report could not be considered an "end." This report, she posited, must be reviewed and acted upon. She then noted that "some suggest" that the review and negotiation process continue until the NATO Bucharest Summit in April 2008. We responded strongly to both Laranjinha and Araujo that the troika discussions were not open-ended, and that discussion of extensive delays would contribute to instability rather than prevent it.

¶12. (C/NF) Laranjinha said Minister Amado appreciated the entry of Swedish Foreign Minister Bildt into the discussions, given his deep experience in the region. From the Portuguese optic, however, Sweden had taken no leadership role regarding any particular policy regarding Kosovo's future.

Iran

¶13. (C/NF) Araujo noted her belief that Russia did not want a nuclear-armed Iran. The differences between Russia's positions and those of the EU or U.S. is perceptions of Iran's current and future capabilities. Araujo said that the EU would push Russia to be active and responsible regarding Iran. It was the EU's position, Araujo noted, that IAEA cooperation was welcome, but that Iran must conform to UNSCR demands regarding uranium enrichment.

Central Asia

¶14. (C/NF) Following her comment on laying the groundwork for

dialogue with Russia, Araujo noted that Portugal's engagement with Uzbekistan -- built on the German presidency's earlier efforts -- was the "hidden success" of Portugal's presidency.

Araujo mentioned Nagorno-Karabakh as one of the other Central Asian issues that she found troubling. Araujo noted that she would chair a troika on Central Asia in Brussels October 29 and would greatly appreciate U.S. questions and comments in advance in order to be properly prepared.

Comment

¶15. (C) Based on these meetings and a face-to-face discussion between Ambassador Hoffman and Foreign Minister Amado today (septel), it appears that the Portuguese are intent on making the same points that we would make, albeit not as assertively as we would like. Our interlocutors, perhaps anticipating criticism of the objectives for the summit, were careful to note that the EU-Russia agenda was developed in Brussels, not in Lisbon. We were struck by Laranjinha's report that some in the EU are suggesting that Kosovo negotiations may continue through April. That is the first reference to the need for a sustained extension beyond December 10 we have heard from anyone in the Portuguese government. Although we disputed that point forcefully and will continue to do so, we wonder whether this idea is being promoted within the EU, and by whom.

Hoffman